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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002571

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH SPEAKER OF IRAQI COUNCIL OF  
REPRESENTATIVES

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission David M. Satterfield for Reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Iraqi Council of Representatives (CoR) Speaker, Mahmoud Mashadani, described to Charge Satterfield and CG Casey his efforts to support the Prime Minister, his recent discussions in Tehran, and the "Baathist trap" he fell into when he remarked on the presence of Israeli troops in the Coalition base in Babil. The Charge pressed Mashadani to prevent further CoR consideration of CPA 17. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Charge and General Casey called on CoR Speaker Mahmoud Mashadani on July 16. Charge began by noting the Prime Minister's recent launching of both a National Reconciliation Program and an Economic Reform Plan and that the U.S. is urging him to put in place the needed steps to realize these programs. For example, the Debaathification review falls to the CoR, but the Prime Minister and Cabinet should also express their views on this issue. The Charge asked Mashadani for his views.

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Council of Representative Developments  
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¶3. (C) In response, Mashadani said that the CoR was strong and that the various parties were "coming together" under his neutrality and efforts to bridge differences. He meets regularly with both bloc leaders and regular members of the CoR. One area of progress involved the Sadristes who gradually were distancing themselves from criminal activities (presumably associated with JAM) and those who followed Moqtada ideologically. The CoR members were in agreement that criminals should be punished. He described a recent meeting that reported on Northern Ireland's experience in reconciliation. Dawa leader Haider Abadi asked the speaker how they (the Irish) had dealt with those who committed crimes against the people. The answer was that Ireland pardoned them all. Mashadani believed Iraqis should learn from others' experiences, including the value of forgiving those who may have harmed you. He then observed recent regional developments showing foolish actions: Hezbollah has kidnapped two soldiers and will destroy Lebanon by doing so. One Israeli soldier is kidnapped in Gaza to trade for 8,000 Palestinian detainees: Palestinian casualties only increase. None of these moves would break Israel. Finally, Mashadani turned to Debaathification. He said he would approach it "wisely, calmly, and in the spirit of consensus." He added, "The Iraqi people as a whole were more valuable than a few Baathists."

¶4. (C) Mashadani said he had an "understanding" with the Prime Minister. The CoR would be his shield and would protect him. He called attention to his effort to get the emergency law extended quickly, which he did despite parliamentary complaints that he ram-rodged it through. He said he did this to protect the government; whatever the government asked of the Parliament, it would give them. In

response to the Charge's questions about a law for provincial elections and investment; Mashadani said the CoR would finish the elections law (the new law on the Independent High Electoral Commission) before the session ended at the end of the month.

¶5. (C) Mashadani criticized his fellow Tawafuq members for boycotting the CoR in reaction to the kidnapping of Tawafuq representative Taysir Mashadani. He said it was not a smart move, and their decision to return to the CoR reflected the strongly negative public reaction to their decision. He said the boycott reflected Khalaf Al Alayan's influence. He also said that the government ministers did not understand the real situation in Iraq, since they all lived in the Green Zone and travel with massive PSDs - how can the Minister of Defense protect us, he hears, when they cannot even protect themselves?

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Israeli Army in Babylon  
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¶6. (C) General Casey and Charge brought up Mashadani's recent remarks about an Israeli brigade occupying one of the Coalition sites in Babil province and pointed out that such remarks endanger his soldiers. Mashadani did not deny what he had said, but claimed he had "fallen in a Baathist trap." He said he was discussing culture and antiquities with a group in Bahrain. Someone mentioned that there is a closed military area in the area of the Babylon ruins that belonged to the Polish contingent. Some in the group questioned why the area was closed and no one allowed in. Mashadani said he threw out the idea that maybe it was the Israelis, since Iraq was the ancient home of the Israelites - Abraham came from Ur

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(modern-day Nasiriyah) - maybe they were looking for Jewish antiquities. Mashadani indicated that he had not been serious in his remarks.

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Mashadani in Tehran  
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¶7. (C) Mashadani volunteered a read-out of his recent discussions in Tehran. He said he had offered to bring back any messages from the Iranians to the Americans, but the Iranians did not give him one. He told the Iranians that they should welcome the Americans in Iraq, since they had toppled the Saddam regime and put a Shia government in its place. He commented to the Iranians that unless they had a "Taliban or Baathist agenda" they should not worry about what the Americans were doing in Iraq. He warned them that if they were not careful, the U.S.-Iraqi alliance would become strong, much stronger than anything the West ever had with Saddam and Iran would be the loser. He insisted that the U.S. military could not leave Iraq now; if they did, chaos would result. He also said he told them to stop supporting the Mahdi Army.

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Stay Away from CPA 17  
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¶8. (C) The Charge asked Mashadani to stop any further consideration of annulling CPA 17 (that grants immunity to Coalition Forces and contractors). It was a dangerous issue for public debate and had best be left alone. Mashadani told him not to worry, "we won't let you leave; you are our protectors."  
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